

Message Text

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SUBJECT: AVELLINO - BREAKDOWN IN INTER-PARTY DIALOGUE

1. AVELLINO, A POOR AGRICULTURAL PROVINCE IN THE CAMPANIA REGION, IS THE SCENE OF AN AT LEAST TEMPORARY BREAKDOWN IN THE ACCORD AMONG THE SO-CALLED CONSTITUTIONAL PARTIES. THIS OCCURRENCE AND THE HEIGHTENED POLITICAL TENSION CHARACTERIZED BY PCI (AND LAY PARTY) ATTACK ON "PERFIDIOUS" CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS IS DUE TO A DC DECISION TO TEMPORARILY SEIZE CONTROL OF THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT ITSELF, IN THE ABSENCE OF INTER-PARTY AGREEMENT ON GIUNTA COMPOSITION.

2. THE DC HAS BEEN DOMINANT AND REMAINS STRONG IN AVELLINO CITY (42 OF VOTE TOTAL IN 1975 ELECTIONS TO THE PCI 17). IN THE

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PROVINCE, HOWEVER, THE PARTY HAS LONG BEEN LESS INFLUENTIAL, SHARING POWER WITH THE LEFT (THE AVELLINO DC ENTERED INTO THE FIRST PROVINCIAL CENTER-LEFT ARRANGEMENT). THE 1974 PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS GAVE THE DC 34 (DOWN 3), THE PCI 21 (UP 3), THE PSI 16 AND THE PSDI 13 (BOTH UP FROM PRIOR ELECTIONS). AVELLINO'S DC IS DOMINATED BY THE LEFTIST (MORE OPEN TO PCI) "BASE" CURRENT. THE ARRANGEMENT IN EFFECT UNTIL A NOVEMBER 1977 PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT BREAKDOWN WAS AN ALL DC GIUNTA AT CITY HALL AND A LEFTIST

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(PCI/PSI/PSDI) PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION. THAT RATHER ANOMALOUS ARRANGEMENT COULD NOT HOLD WHEN PSI COUNCILOR ANGELO DI STASIO RESIGNED FROM HIS PARTY, BECOMING AN INDEPENDENT IN THE DC ORBIT (ACCORDING TO SOME THE DEAL INCLUDED A PATRONAGE-TYPE JOB FOR DI STASIO), AND THEREBY REDUCING THE LEFTIST GIUNTA TO MINORITY STATUS.

3. THE DC, DIRECTLY CONTROLLING BY NOVEMBER) 12 OF 30 PROVINCIAL COUNCILORS (THE PCI HAS 7), CALLED FOR A NEW PROVINCIAL ARRANGEMENT

WITH THE DC "IN". THE PSI, HAVING LOST A COUNCILOR WAS OUTRAGED, THE PSDI WAS DIFFIDENT, AND THE PCI PUSHED FOR A "STRENGTHENED" GIUNTA OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTIES. HAD THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT CRISIS NOT INTERVENED SOME DC/PCI LOCAL DEAL MIGHT HAVE BEEN ARRANGED, BUT DECEMBER EVENTS IN ROME ENSURED STALEMATE IN AVELLINO.

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SINCE THE LAY PARTIES REFUSED TO AGREE TO A CENTER-LEFT ARRANGEMENT AND THE DC WOULD NOT CONSIDER ENTERING A GIUNTA WITH THE PCI, DISSOLUTION OF THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT WAS THE NEXT STEP. THE DC AVERTED THAT CONTINGENCY BY ACCEPTING VOTES OF "INDEPENDENTS" ELECTED ON THE MSI TICKET AND PUSHING THROUGH AN ALL DC PROVINCIAL GIUNTA WITH EX-PSI COUNCILOR DI STASIO AS PRESIDENT.

4. THE REACTION OF BOTH PCI AND LAY PARTIES IS INCREDOULOUS AND RIGHTOUS OUTRAGE AT THE DC (BASE CLURRENT) POLITICAL TURNABOUT. A NUMBER OF PROVINCIAL DC MEMBERS . (THEMSELVES BASE CURRENT) ALSO QUESTIONED THE PARTY DECISION AND PRESSED FOR A RETURN TO "EQUILIBRIUM" AMONG THE POLITICAL FORCES. PROVINCIAL PRESIDENT DI STASIO HIMSELF AND THE DC CALL THE ARRANGEMENT TEMPORARY (TO PASS A PROVINCIAL BUDGET AND AVOID GOVERNMENT DISSOLUTION). DI STASIO PROMISE5 TO STEP DOWN AFTER THE BUDGET IS APPROVED (AND A NEW GOVERNMENT FORMED IN ROME) SO THAT INTER-PARTY NEGOTIATIONS CAN PROCEED.

5. THE DC HAS DEMONSTRATED THAT IT CAN WREST CONTROL OF THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION, IF NECESSARY. AND THE BASE CURRENT, CONSIDERED THE MOST AMENABLE TO SHARING POWER WITH THE PCI, HAS SHOW ITSELF WILLING TO CONFRONT THE COMMUNIST PARTY IN TACTICAL SHOW-

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DOWN. THAT CONFRONTATION WOULD BE USEFUL SHOULD A BREAKDOWN IN ROME LEAD TO NATIONAL ELECTIONS. THE TEMPORARY DC POWER PLAY ALSO ALLOWS TIME FOR A POSSIBLE PSI NATIONAL POLICY SHIFT LEADING TO A SOLID CENTER/LEFT ARRANGEMENT IN AVELLINO. IN FORTHCOMING NEGOTIATIONS ON PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT COMPOSITION THE DC WILL BE DEALING FROM STRENGTH AND MAY WELL INSIST ON RETAINING THE PROVINCIAL PRESIDENCY, FOR BOTH POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC REASONS (APPROVAL OF PUBLIC WORKS CONTRACTS INVOLVE PATRONAGE AND MONEY). THE POLITICAL ISSUE WILL REMAIN EXTENT OF DC/PCI CO-INVOLVEMENT IN THE PROVINCE GOVERNMENT. COLANTONIO

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